

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY GABORONE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 111451

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: OVIP (BANDA, H. KAMUZU), PDIP, RH, MI, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BANDA'S MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY
4/28/78

SUMMARY: THE SECRETARY PAID A 45-MINUTE COURTESY CALL
ON PRESIDENT BANDA AT THE MADISON HOTEL. SUBSTANTIVE
CONVERSATION CENTERED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON RHODESIA. NO
NEW GROUND WAS BROKEN. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SECRETARY APOLOGIZED FOR THE PRESIDENT AND
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VICE PRESIDENT'S INABILITY TO RECEIVE BANDA, AND
CONVEYED THE PRESIDENT'S BEST WISHES AND HIGH REGARD.
PRESIDENT BANDA THANKED HIM, RECALLING HIS MEETINGS
WITH PRESIDENTS KENNEDY AND JOHNSON. HE EXPRESSED THE
HOPE THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD FIND TIME TO VISIT MALAWI
DURING HIS NEXT AFRICAN TRIP.

2. PRESIDENT BANDA THEN REVIEWED THE HISTORY OF THE RHODESIAN COLONY, IN SUPPORT OF HIS VIEW THAT RHODESIA COULD NOT BE LUMPED WITH OTHER FORMER COLONIES IN WHICH THE UK HAD INTERVENED WITH FORCE, SUCH AS CYPRUS, GUYANA AND KENYA.

3. BANDA SAID HE WAS PLEASED WHEN HE HEARD IN DECEMBER 1977 THAT SMITH HAD "SURRENDERED." SMITH, HE SAID, HAD NOWHERE TO GO. HE HAD TO REMAIN IN RHODESIA, AND THEREFORE TO ATTAIN A REAL TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE MAJORITY" THE SUCCESSOR REGIME HAD TO BE ONE UNDER WHICH SMITH COULD LIVE. PATIENCE AND COMPROMISE WERE REQUIRED.

4. THE SECRETARY ASKED HOW PRESIDENT BANDA SAW THE SITUATION DEVELOPING FROM HERE, OBSERVING THAT THE SALISBURY REGIME HAD NOT FLATLY REFUSED AN ALL PARTIES MEETING. BANDA REPLIED THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER PROBLEM THAT WAS MORE IMPORTANT. THE US AND UK BELIEVED IN ELECTIONS, BUT IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD THOSE WHOM THE US, THE UK AND AFRICAN LEADERS WANTED TO RULE WOULD NOT WIN. MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE WOULD WIN, BECAUSE OF THEIR MAJORITY TRIBAL ORIGINS, AND NKOMO COULD NOT.

5. THE SECRETARY ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. PRESIDENT BANDA ASKED IN REPLY WHETHER CONFIDENTIAL

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IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE US AND THE UK TO PERSUADE NKOMO AND SITHOLE TO COME TOGETHER. HE RECALLED THAT SITHOLE AT ONE TIME HAD BEEN A SUBORDINATE OF NKOMO, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE BEST OUTCOME WOULD BE A GOVERNMENT WITH NKOMO AS PRESIDENT AND SITHOLE AS PRIME MINISTER. SITHOLE WAS THE ABLEST MAN, BUT NKOMO HAD MORE EXPERIENCE. IF THE SECRETARY AND DR. OWEN WOULD TRY TO GET THEM TOGETHER, BANDA WOULD DO HIS BEST AS WELL. BANDA KNEW THAT MUZOREWA ALSO HAD SOME FOLLOWING WITHIN RHODESIA, AND HE HAD NO QUARREL WITH ANY OF THEM, BUT NKOMO AND SITHOLE WERE THE ABLEST. MUGABE, HE SAID, WAS AMBITIOUS, AND HOPED UNDER THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S UMBRELLA TO INDUCE SITHOLE FOLLOWERS TO DEFECT FROM NKOMO'S FORCES. BANDA AGREED WITH THE SECRETARY THAT MUGABE SEEMED TO WANT TO FIGHT NOW AND PERHAPS GO TO THE POLLS LATER. HE WOULD DO SO, BANDA SAID, WITH THE HELP OF "OUTSIDE FORCES."

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